MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: As I have already stated on the floor of the House, the accounts are being audited by a special staff supervised by a special officer.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: May I know when he began the work?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: Three months ago.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: May I know when the Food Department was opened?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: That was done in the year 1118.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: Does the honourable member remember that the same answer was given last year also?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: No, Sir.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: May I know when the Audit Report would be available?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: A full staff of Auditors headed by a Special Food Accounts Officer is at work and it is expected that they will complete the auditing without much delay.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: As the accounts for 1121 are being completed, are we not going to having a fresh crop of accounts?

PRESIDENT: Order, order. I think in order to remove misapprehensions on the matter, I may say that although the audit has not been completely finished, preliminary figures have been furnished to Government and I give the undertaking that the full audited report of these transactions will be placed on the floor of the House at the earliest possible moment and will be published for public information. I may, however, for the satisfaction of the honourable members, say that what was apprehended at one time, viz., that the Government would be put to a loss of a crore or two, has been completely proved false. We are now in a position to say that on purchases worth over 23 crores the net loss will not be anything even approaching a few lakhs. On the whole the Government will be on the right side so far as the accounts are concerned. These are preliminary findings.

Purchase of foodstuff.

602. *MR. K. G. KESAVAN NAIR: Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether any innovation has been contemplated by the Government in the existing system of bringing into Travancore of food articles from outside the State;

(*b*) if so, the nature of the scheme contemplated; and

(*c*) whether any wholesale licences have been issued to any agencies for purchasing food articles outside the State?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: (*a*) No.

(*b*) In view of the answer to (*c*) this question does not arise.

(*c*) No.

MR. P. O. THOMAS: May I know the date on which this question was received by the Government?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: I cannot answer that off-hand

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MR. RAJYASEVANIRATA S. CHATTANATHAKARAYALAR: May I ask whether the Government of Madras have not lifted the ban on the export of chillies?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: Only within the Madras Province.

PRESIDENT: The Madras Government have been careful to say that they lift the ban as regards the Madras Province only. They cannot export.

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: What they have done is to remove the restriction of the movement of the commodity from the District to another within the Presidency.

MR. P. O. THOMAS: May I know when this question was admitted—Is it not some 10 months ago?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: I am not in a position to say that. This is a continuous session and the questions might have been held over.

MR. P. O. THOMAS: Cannot the honourable member guess the time from the serial number? I can see from the number that the question is at least 10 months old.

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: I cannot venture to make a guess.

Permit for import of foodstuffs.

603. *MR. P. S. MOHAMED (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a concise statement of the scheme followed by the Department for issuing permit for the import of chillies, onions, potatoes, etc?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: Permits are issued on a regional basis for the import of chillies, onions, potatoes, etc. to recognised merchants of the State dealing in these commodities.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: May I know whether permits are issued month after month to particular merchants at particular localities?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: Permits are issued periodically.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: On what basis?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: On the basis of the standing and the capacity of the merchants to operate the quota.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: May I know whether there are other merchants from the same locality who get the quota?

MR. K. R. NARAYANA IYER: As far as possible the distribution is made on a regional basis considering the claims of leading merchants.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: Why should it be restricted to one merchant in the same locality?

PRESIDENT: Now the situation is that lawyers and people who are not in the line are leaving their profession for the purpose of importing onions and chillies, Government are not showing any concession to them. The idea of Government is to give everybody permits at intervals.

MR. PULIYOOR T. P. VELAYUDHAN PILLAI: May I know whether any permits have been given to wholesale merchants at Chengannoor?

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